



AKBAR HUNTING.

THE STORY OF INDIA

BY
E. LUCIA TURNBULL, M.B.E.

BOOK II

WITH COLOURED FRONTISPIECE
AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

IN this book we are going to learn more about the good that men through the ages have brought to the making of India as she is to-day, and to forget so far as we can the bad. Thus there will not be much in it about battles or strife of any kind. And in learning about the good things we shall begin to see India with new eyes, not as a land crushed by centuries of strife but as the home of culture and the scene of progress.

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CHAPTER I

THE STRENGTH OF THE SOUTH

No one is afraid of a journey from the north to the south of India to-day. He has only to take a ticket at the railway station, jump into a train, and he is quickly carried from one place to the other. If he wants a sea trip he can go by steamer from Calcutta or Karachi to any other port in India, and it would be a strange thing if he did not arrive quite safely at the end of his journey. He might go by motor-car on splendid roads, or, if he was very up-to-date, fly by aeroplane. But three thousand years ago things were very different. The Aryans must have been good travellers, or they would never have

reached India at all. But for a long time they could not manage the journey from north to south. They got on quite well until they were brought to a halt by the dense forests which grew at the foot of the Vindhya hills. They did not like the idea of trying to cross the Narbada river either, with its deep dark pools, its rocks and rapids. . So they said among themselves, "We will try no longer to reach the land of monkeys," for it comforted them to pretend that the dark races whom they had driven out of the Punjab were no better than *bandar-log*.

They may have really thought that the people of Dravida, which was their name for Tamil-land, were like the poor jungle folk, who lived upon wild fruits and even ate mice and little birds. They may have believed that it was not possible for anyone who was not of Aryan birth to be civilized. . Whatever they thought or believed, it seems certain that very few of them ever got as far as Tamil-land. As they had advanced towards the east, they called the south *dakshina*, which means right hand. From the word *dakshina* the name Deccan has come into use.

So it happened that people of the north settled down to the idea that the south was given over to

wild barbarians, and when some Brahmans found their way to Tamil-land, they were amazed to discover a civilized people living there. Very far from being monkeys, or even jungle folk, they were prosperous and contented under wise and good kings. These northern visitors found also that the cities of the south were just as fine as those of the north, for the southern kings were great builders. They loved to build temples, and those that they have left behind them are as beautiful as anything in India. The temple at Tanjore, built by Rajaraja Chola in the tenth century, is perhaps the most famous, but there are others of great beauty at Kanchi (Conjiveram), which were built about a century earlier. Kanchi was visited by the same Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, whom we have already met at the court of King Harsha. He was on his way to Ceylon, but civil war there prevented his crossing over. So he remained at Kanchi, and tells us in his diary what a fine city it was, and how brave and trustworthy the Tamil people were. Kanchi was a great centre of learning. From far and wide people came to sit at the feet of the sages who taught there. On the edge of a big tank, which reflected its beautifully carved



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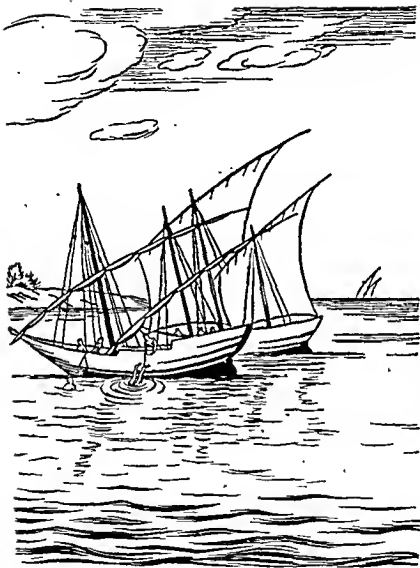
walls, the Ekambareswar Temple was built. To-day it still stands, solid and splendid, a joy to all who behold it.

In those early times the people of the south had one great advantage over those of the north; they possessed a flourishing sea trade with foreign countries. The Tamils were daring seamen, like the Lascars of to-day. Tamil-land had the good fortune to possess great stores of gold, pearls, conch shells, pepper and spices, and to grow cotton which could be spun into the finest muslin. The fine ladies of Rome and Venice liked to dress themselves up in the delicate muslins of Madura, or wear strings of pearls which had come from the pearl fisheries of Tinnevely. They might have envied the Princess Pandya if they had ever heard of her. She was a princess of Southern India, and owned valuable pearl fisheries, as well as three hundred and sixty-five villages, one for each day of the year. Perhaps she had so many pearls that she had ceased to care for them, and liked better the Roman gold that was paid for them.

If pearls were precious, pepper was still more so. That seems strange, for to-day the poorest person may put as much as he likes in his curry.

But there was a time when men who wanted to make a fortune sailed away in small ships to Southern India to buy pepper and spices. These tasty things were almost worth their weight in gold when sold in Europe, just as once pins, now sold at a penny a hundred, were luxuries for the queens of England. Before the days of steam, when men risked their lives in small sailing-boats, and battled with the great storms of the monsoons, the produce of the East was very valuable. A cargo of pepper and nutmegs cost more than the price paid for it to an Indian merchant—it often cost many lives. For the voyage from England to India, which now lasts two or three weeks, then took many months. Many ships went out and never returned. Others came back with the precious cargo, but of the men who had set out only a few remained. Some had been washed overboard. Others died of scurvy, a disease which attacked the early seamen because they could not get any fresh food, and were often very short of drinking-water.

And so it came about that if anyone was lucky enough to own a nutmeg in England, he took great care of it, and used it only for special dishes! Now that the great steamships go between India and



Europe so often, and take such a short time over the voyage, things are different. In the days of sailing-ships, tea, which has to be brought from China, India or Ceylon, was a great luxury in the West; only the very rich could afford to drink it, and then it was so weak that the famous Dr. Johnson drank sixteen cups at one tea-party. Now, like pepper and spices, it is quite cheap. But pearls are still costly, and if the Princess Pandya were living to-day, she would still be a rich lady from the proceeds of her pearl fisheries.

The prosperity of Southern India did not depend entirely on spices, gold and pearls. The timber grown in the great teak forests of Malabar was very valuable. From teak the earliest Indian ships were made, and the palaces of kings were built of it before man had learned to use stone and marble. The Tamils have always been good farmers, and the rich black cotton soil of the Deccan and the far south grows some of the finest crops in the world. To anyone who has seen the tall crops of *bajri* or *jowari*, or walked along the *bands* between the bright green paddy-fields, Southern India must seem like the land of plenty. The most important season of the year is harvest time. Then,

if the crops are good, the Tamil people of all classes rejoice. The great time is the boiling of the first meal of new rice. In Coorg the new rice is pounded and the flour made into a dough which is eaten by all present. In all Tamil countries the harvest feast is the same. A week of great fun follows the tasting of the first rice. In Coorg the festival is called Huttari, and is kept up by a display of games and dancing. At a little distance from the performers, a band of musicians sit near a fire, which they have lit to warm themselves and their instruments, two horns and two drums. The horns are very large and made of brass. There is one large drum and a little kettle-drum.

Three men then step into the centre of the open space and call aloud three names, "Ayappa! Mahadeva! Bhagavati!" Ayappa is the Coorg forest god, Mahadeva the Siva of the Hindus, and Bhagavati his wife.

A game then follows. A peg is driven into the centre of the ground. A piece of rope is fastened to it by a loose loop. The people who make this preparation then seize someone. A piece of wood is cut and shaped into seven balls. The man holding the rope puts six of these balls in a



circle round the peg at a distance of the rope's length, the seventh ball is put close by the peg in the centre of the ground. All the players now try to pick up and carry off the balls without being touched by the man who guards them. If any of the players are touched, the person touched must take his turn to guard the centre ball. When six balls have been safely carried off by the players, the seventh ball is moved to a distance of a foot from the peg. To get this one without being touched by the guardian is now the idea of all the players. If they succeed in carrying it off, the guardian must run like a hare until he reaches the place where the musicians sit. If he can do this without being caught by the rest of the players the game is ended. But if he is caught he is brought before the Nettleman, who has been waiting all the time with a long *Angare* stick, a large stinging-nettle in his hand. The hands and feet of the prisoner are well tickled, and so the play ends with a great deal of fun and laughter. This game, which is called "the Chandukitti" (ball and peg play), would be a good one anywhere, but it is played at its best in Coorg.

When it is over, different kinds of plays are

performed. Ancient times are lived over again; mock battles are fought. Once again Karikala—the great Chola—sets out to destroy his enemies. The Pandyan king flies before him; the Chera king falls on the field of battle, an arrow from the bow of Karikala through his breast. Great is the joy of the Chola camp. Men are merry and dance, but the Chera women weep for the death of their king whom they loved because he was brave and beautiful. Then Karikala cries out, “I have destroyed the Pandya and the Chera. So will I destroy all my enemies.” Against him come nine kings of Tamil-land. They are all big men and strong. Each king wears a crown of gold, and has a white umbrella held over him. But Karikala the brave, with his mighty bow and arrows, shoots the nine crowns from off the heads of the nine kings. The umbrella-bearers fly, and the kings after them. “Now,” says Karikala, “I have no enemy in South India.” He then attempts the conquest of the north, and gets as far as the Himalayas, which bar his way. He gets quite angry with the mountain, and beats it with a Chendu, a weapon which had been given to him by the priest of the great temple at Kanchi. But the Himalayas are stronger even

than Karikala Chola. He cannot conquer them, and turns back in disgust, having branded the rock with a tiger, his royal emblem.

All this, and more, the Tamils bring to life in their harvest time. Scenes from the life of another great Chola king, Rajaraja, are shown. The history of their land was not learnt by them from books. It came down from father to son through many generations, just as the hymns of the Rig Veda came down, before they were written out.

Now, when all children go to school, they can read about the great men and great deeds of their own country as well as those of other countries. They can act the great events of the past, just as the happy ryots of Southern India act them. In England there is a saying that "A cat may look at a king." In India any schoolboy or schoolgirl may for a short time make believe to be some great character of history or romance. And perhaps it is as good to play at being a king as to be one, for as we learn more about history we shall see that sometimes kings have a very bad time, and are even sometimes envious of the humble ryot working in his fields, or driving his oxen back after ploughing.

A palace is a good place to live in, but so is the home of the Tamil farmer, with its *pyall* running along the whole length of the house, where, after his work is done, he can sit and chat with his friends. Then the children, home from school, come out and beg for a story. The oxen are chewing up the dry grass put down for them; the babies crawl about the ground or make mud-pies. Inside the house, the women are singing scraps of the Hurrari, or harvest song :

" Sun and moon the seasons make,
Rule o'er the sky they take.
God is lord of heaven and earth.
All the joyous earnest toil
Happy ryots give the soil,
Our rich land is fully worth."

The sun sets. Outside, the men, all seated on the *pyall*, are talking about the crops and their hopes for next year's harvest. The women cease grinding. It is time for the children to be put to sleep. The older ones creep quietly to the mats which are their only beds. The baby is lifted into a wooden cradle slung from the roof by ropes or chains. Sometimes, if its father has been very lucky with his crops, the cradle is hung with bells. As the

by large ships. The forests of teak still remain, and the great temples, and the men who, like those who have gone before them, make up the Strength of the South.



CHAPTER II

THE HEROIC RAJPUTS

“EVERY Rajput is by birth a gentleman, however poor he may be, and the Chief is only the first among equals.”

Between the valley of the Indus on the west, and the Chambal river on the east, lies Rajasthan, the “Land of Princes,” which to-day we call Rajputana.

Throughout the north-west of Rajputana stretches a sandy desert; on the south lie the Vindhya mountains.

This “Land of Princes” has been inherited by the Rajputs from warrior races who held power in India long before the arrival of the first Moslems. Some centuries after the death of Harsha we learn of Rajput tribes governing Northern and Central India. These tribes, who fought constantly against each other, were loyal to their own chief and clan. They were especially loyal to their own particular State, whether it was large or small, and performed wonderful deeds of bravery to defend it from the

enemy. These deeds are said and sung by the bards of Rajputana to this very day. When the Rajput regiments were on active service in France, the Rajput soldiers put heart into each other by retelling the old heroic tales of Rajasthan.

If every day for a year we heard a fresh story of Rajput valour, there would still be many left, for to-day there are thirty-six royal races of Rajputs, and every one has its annals of past glory.

The chief of these royal races are those which claim descent from the sun. The rulers of Udaipur (Mewar), Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and their clans are all "sun-born." Other Rajput races claim descent from the moon, or from Agni, the god of fire. And the deeds of these warrior people are often worthy of children of the sun, the moon, or fire.

The Rajputs have always been fighting men. They brought up their sons to become warriors. Before a child could lift a real sword he was given a toy one, and with it slashed at the heads of animals to strengthen his baby arm. Before he could walk he was lifted on to the back of his father's war-horse. And if he could neither read nor write, he was not ashamed, if he could ride. In this way the



Rajput boys grew up strong and hardy, perfect horsemen and swordsmen, and, as a rule, very perfect gentlemen. For they fought clean and fair. A woman, a fallen enemy, or a weak person they did not make war upon. If any man, whether friend or enemy, had eaten of their food, he was as safe in their camp as in his own home.

They worshipped Hindu gods, but in some ways their customs were different from those of most Hindus. They did not spare animal life, for they were great hunters.

The chief event in the Rajput year was the Aheria or hunting festival. It took place in the spring, in honour of the goddess Gauri. Then every man and boy who could sit a horse or carry a spear made up the party.

On the day before, the Rana gave to his chiefs and servants a dress of green to be worn at the hunt. The astrologer was then asked to fix the proper hour for the hunt to set out. Then with shouts of joy and snatches of song the merry hunters galloped off towards the jungle. The sport was both dangerous and exciting, for at any moment a boar might turn and charge, bringing both horse and rider down.



When the hunt was over, all the party sat down to a splendid meal provided by the Rana. After which, if the sport had been good, the hunters returned to the capital, merry and triumphant.

Pig-sticking, which is like the old boar-hunts, is still the favourite sport of Indian princes. In the hunting season they entertain large parties of guests in the good old Rajput fashion.

The fortresses of Rajputana are very strong. Most of them are perched upon the summit of a rocky hill. Some of them still stand very much as they were built, but the most famous of them all, that of Chitor, is a heap of ruins.

Among these ruins can still be seen the remains of splendid palaces, finely carved temples, and monuments to Rajput heroes who fell defending Chitor. There is one palace which has escaped ruin, the palace of the Rani Padmini.

She was a princess of Ceylon, and the fame of her beauty spread far and wide. The bards tell us that no star was brighter than her eyes, no rose petal more delicate than her skin. Her teeth were as white as the pearls of her own island home, and her little hands like lotus buds.

She was married to the Rana Ratan Singh, a

gallant Rajput prince. Together they lived happily in their palace. It was built on the edge of a tank, which reflected the beauty of the palace, and of its mistress when she sat beside the water.

At Delhi reigned Alau-d-din the Tartar. He heard of the beauty of Padmini and said, "She shall be mine." Twice he demanded that she should be sent to him. Both times the demand was refused with scorn.

Then the troops of Alau-d-din gathered like a thunder-cloud under the walls of Chitor. Inside the fortress the Rajput defenders prepared to die rather than surrender. The siege was long. The Rajputs were worn out with watching. They well knew that the Tartar Sultan would withdraw his army if Padmini was sent to Delhi. But the Rajput defenders would have died to a man rather than betray their dear princess.

At last Alau-d-din sent word to Ratan Singh that if he might only once see Padmini he would withdraw his troops. He even offered to look at her in a mirror so that she might not be offended. This request was granted. Alau-d-din came to Chitor. For a few moments he gazed at the reflection of Padmini in the mirror. He found her

far more beautiful than all the poets had described her. Then he went away, and with true Rajput courtesy, Ratan Singh accompanied him on foot to the gates of the fortress. Suddenly a troop of Alau-d-din's men sprang out and seized Ratan Singh. Before he could draw his sword he was a prisoner, and was hurried away to the Tartar camp.

Then the crafty Alau-d-din sent a letter to Padmini, in which he told her that her husband would be set free if she herself came to his camp as a hostage.

Padmini read the Sultan's letter. Then she sent for her uncle and his nephew. The nephew was only twelve years old, but Padmini knew he would give his life to serve her.

They came to her, and she told them of a plan she had to outwit the wicked Sultan. Then she sent Alau-d-din a reply, "I will come to your camp as a hostage for my husband, if I may bring with me all my maidens."

Alau-d-din was delighted when he read Padmini's letter. Her request was easy to grant—no escort, but a few high-born Rajput ladies!

He sent an answer at once to say that Padmini might come, attended by as fine a company of



CLIFFORD WEBB

ladies as she wished. "And when she is safely in my power," he thought, "then I will march in force upon Chitor, and destroy the fortress and every Rajput in it."

One day a procession of litters left Chitor, seven hundred of them. When the procession arrived at the Tartar camp it halted outside, and the Sultan sent to ask the reason of the delay. A message was brought to him that Padmini wished to say good-bye to her husband, Ratan Singh.

"If I do not give permission," thought Alau-d-din, "this lovely lady may turn back, and I shall lose her for ever." So he sent word that the princess might bid her husband a brief farewell. Ratan Singh was allowed to enter her litter. Half an hour passed. Alau-d-din grew impatient, and sent word that Padmini must come at once. There was a shout from the guard, "Ratan Singh has escaped!" It was true, for in each litter, instead of a Rajput lady, there was a Rajput warrior, who crouched with drawn sword, ready to leap to the rescue of his chief. In safety Ratan Singh reached Chitor, but his gallant rescuers were all slain.

Tricked, and by a woman, Alau-d-din swore to avenge himself. With a mighty army he marched

upon Chitor. The fortress fell. "Now," thought the Sultan, "I can take Padmini," but she had gone where he could never, never reach her. She, with all her maidens, had escaped capture by death on the funeral pyre. It is said that Alau-d-din, in bitter fury at losing the most beautiful woman in all Hindustan, broke up the palaces and temples that he found inside Chitor. He threw down images even by the wayside, but when he came to the palace of Ratan Singh and Padmini, he looked at it and thought of the princess and her beauty. "Let her palace stand," he said, and turned away with a heavy heart in spite of all his conquests.

Alone among the ancient palaces it has been spared from ruin, to remind us of the days that have gone.

A steep road zigzags up the rock from the plain to the hill-top. Seven strong gates defend the fortress, and a great wall hides the top from view. The hill-side is nothing but rock and thick jungle. Beyond the last gate is the flat top of the hill and here are the ruins of the city. This city was the capital of the Ranas of Mewar. Only a few Rajputs defend the fortress, and at times about a dozen chiefs of the two great Rajput houses.



an attack was expected. Three times Chitor was taken by the enemy. Twice it was re-won by the gallantry of the Rajputs. The last time, during the reign of the Emperor Akbar, it fell for ever, and remained as it is to-day, a heap of ruins. With it fell the hope of the Rajputs, for far worse than death had happened behind the great walls. The Rana of Mewar, Udaï Singh, had run away, the first coward in the history of Chitor. At the dead of night he had escaped to Udaipur, leaving his kinsman Patta, a boy in his teens, to defend the fortress. As he stood at the great gate, a glorious figure, there came to him his mother and his newly wed bride. Each of the women carried a lance, and both of them fought like men. Patta was killed, and beside him fell the two gallant women, his mother and his young wife. A great cry rose from the Rajput ranks; then from the *rawala* the smoke of a fire. The funeral pyres were lit, and towards them, in one long noble procession, went the Rajput women, singing hymns, their hands full of flowers. They did not fear the flames, for far beyond them they hoped to meet again their brave husbands who had given their lives for their beloved land.

Not very long afterwards a great patriot arose to win back Mewar, the heroic Partap Singh. For years he defied the power of the Emperor Akbar. Bit by bit he recovered the lost kingdom. But his highest hope was never realized. He died without seeing the banner of the Sesodias float from the battlements of Chitor.

Only a few years ago there died another Rajput patriot. He, too, was called Partap Singh. A lover of his land, and of all things noble, he was the trusted friend of the British Empire. During the Great War, when over seventy years of age, he sailed from India to play his part in France. And later, when he heard that his favourite nephew had been killed in action, he said quite simply, "I think Dalpat Singh met his *great day*!"

To meet death bravely has always been "the great day" of the Rajput warrior.

He is carried to his last resting-place with his shield on his back and his good sword in his hand, as fully armed as when he went into battle. Behind him is led his faithful horse. He will never again carry his master, or any other. He is given to the Rajput god of war, and remains with the priest near the shrine. When a Rajput chief dies, a

monument is raised over him by his son. The spot where it stands is called "the place of the great sacrifice." No one ever enters it except to offer flowers or to perform some sacred rite. And so in peace rest the spirits of the brave and beautiful who have fought and died for Rajasthan.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVOTION OF ISLAM

WHEN a great tribe offered to follow the prophet Mohammed, and to give him the third of Arabia if he would leave to their chief a little of his power, he replied gently, "Not one green date!"

What was this power for which a great tribe longed so much that a third of a country was offered as the price?

Towards the end of the sixth century (about 570), a boy was born at Mecca and named Mohammed. His father died before Mohammed was born. His mother died when he was six years old, and so he was left an orphan. Although Mohammed was of noble family, he was poor, and the lot of an orphan was a hard one in Arabia. As a child Mohammed often went with the flocks of his tribe, where they grazed in the valleys or on the sides of the mountains. For hour after hour, and day after day, he was alone with his thoughts. High up above the grazing grounds he seemed very

near the sky and very near to God. To him the worship of the men around him seemed futile, for they worshipped idols of stone. He felt the presence of the one God whom no man could see, but who was in all around him.

In his fortieth year Mohammed felt the call. He felt that he was the chosen of God to teach the Arabs the meaning of the Most High; that he was the messenger of God to men, and that he must spend the rest of his life in teaching the truth to all mankind. So he began to preach amongst his tribesmen and the people of Mecca. But they were angry, because their living depended on the temple of their idols. Besides, was he not a boy brought up amongst them? Who was he to claim to be the mouthpiece of God and carry this message to men? So they mocked him, persecuted him and his friends, stoned him, and plotted to kill him. For eight years he seemed to have gained nothing, but he was not discouraged. He was so sure that the God he had found for himself when he was all alone in the desert, the caves and the mountains, was the real and only true God. If men killed him for his belief, then he must die. He was not afraid, and when the Meccans cast him out, a city not his

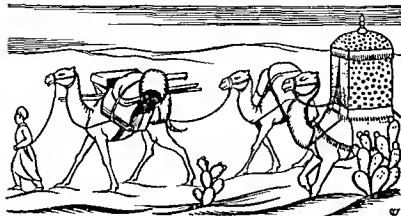
own (Medina) welcomed him. There he taught and preached, and at last invited the people into a brotherhood. That brotherhood became a State, and all Arabia rallied to his standard. This was the simple beginning of one of the greatest religions in the world—Islam, which means devotion or submission to the Will of God.

In India there are over seventy million Moslems to-day. How did they come to be there? The Moslem State grew and expanded in all directions. Mohammed himself was a soldier-saint, and in self-defence led an army, but he liked best to preach, and those who knew him say that he was modest, kind and patient; and so generous that he shared his food, even when he had only very little, with others. He disliked saying *no* to those who asked him a favour. If he met a happy person, he would clasp him warmly by the hand, and he loved little children. He had an intense belief, and he taught it with fervour—one God in everything; the same law for all that truly believed in Him. Rich and poor, prince or peasant, all were one in Islam. There was no caste, no twice-born, and no pariah. But all must believe. Islam! Devotion—submission to the Will of God. It was very simple.

The humble man could understand it as well as the great chief. There was one duty for all; to tell everyone else about Islam, to ask them to believe in Islam, and to show it by their example.

The Arabs were a brave and warlike people. They were not unlike the Rajputs in their ways. Like the Rajputs, they were divided into tribes, and these tribes often fought one another. But now these warlike men were united by Islam and by their firm belief in their mission from God. Everywhere their armies were victorious. The banner of Islam was carried as far as Spain in the west, and Central Asia in the east. An Arab empire was established in Persia, and so became next-door neighbour to India.

There was at that time no settled and united government in India, and the coasts of Western India were infested with pirates. The Arabs were great traders, and this piracy was one reason for the Arab expedition to Sind. And so Sind for a time became an Arab province. In Central Asia great movements of people were going on. One result was the *invasion of India from the north-west* by Turks, Afghans, Persians and other races. They brought Islam with them, and formed the



beginning of the Moslem population of India. But the bulk of Indian Moslems were Hindus by origin, and were converted to Islam before the arrival of the Moguls.

TWO GREAT MOGULS

I

BABUR

Babur is the most delightful character that ever marched into the history of India. By birth a king, by profession a soldier, by religion a Moslem, he was above all a fine man. Brave as the lion his name means, yet he had a kind and gentle heart, and he gave his life for that of his son.

“And what did he do for India? Not as much as he hoped, for he died when he was forty-six. But it was he who taught the Hindus what a lovely thing a garden might be made, and a great many other things besides. His story has been told so often, and in so many ways, that almost everyone knows it. How, when he was only eleven, he became King of Ferghana, which is now a province of Russian Turkestan; how he lost Ferghana to win Samarkand, the golden city of the East, which in his day was one of the first cities of the world. And how he lost Samarkand also, and was forced to wander barefoot amongst the Dekhat hills, and find a shelter with the old headman of a village among these hills. A very old woman, the headman’s mother, told Babur how Taimur the Tartar had invaded India, and come back laden with spoil.

“He was lame,” said the old woman, “but all the more terrible. He swept through the land like a plague. Over the Hindu Kush he went, he and his hungry army. Then down to the plains of Hindustan, the country of five rivers. He did not remain there long, but *came back with camels and caravans loaded with treasure. Gold and jewels from the treasuries of kings. And after him went*

the cries of the widows and the fatherless. It is said that he did not spare the women or the children. He pulled down the idols and destroyed the temples. His army trampled down the growing crops, and burned the villages. It is a long time ago, almost a hundred years ago, since Taimur came back in triumph, bringing the riches of Hindustan."

"I, too, shall go there," said Bābur, forgetting that he had lost all; forgetting that his whole army was now only a few men in rags. "Yes, I shall go there," he said again, and his dark eyes sparkled. Then his young face grew grave. "But I will not hurt the women or the little children. I will stay there and be their king."

And what Bābur said that day in the headman's hut at Dekhat came true. First of all he won back Ferghana and Samarkand, and then made himself King of Kabul. Of all the kingdoms that he won he loved Kabul best, better than Hindustan with all its glories. At Kabul he is buried on the hill-side, by a stream in a beautiful garden.

He kept a diary in which he wrote down an account of his adventures and of all that he saw. From it we learn what India looked like to him, and what he noticed there. He tells us about the

people, the country, the animals, the birds and flowers. He says of Hindustan, "It is a very fine country. It is a quite different world, compared with our countries. Its hills and rivers, its forests and plains, its people and their languages, its animals and plants, its winds and rains, are all of a different nature. The towns of Hindustan are very ugly. They all look alike. The gardens have no walls. . . ."

Then he goes on to describe the animals. First of all the elephant,

which he says the Hindus call *Hathi*.

"It is a very large animal and very clever. It understands whatever you tell it, and does whatever it is bid.



The elephant eats and drinks entirely by means of its trunk. It cannot live if it loses it. The elephant is not covered with wool or hair like other animals. The natives of Hindustan place great faith in their elephants in battle. The elephant has some very valuable qualities: it can carry a great quantity of

baggage over deep and rapid rivers, and passes them with ease. . . . But it has a great stomach, and a single elephant will eat as much grain as seven or fourteen camels."

Then Babur goes on to describe the rhinoceros,

the buffalo, and

different kinds of

deer. He says

that the Hindus

call the monkey

bandar, and that jugglers teach monkeys tricks. About one kind of monkey he writes, "Its hair is yellow, its face white, its tail is not very long," while another is yellowish-blue in colour, and has a skin like a fig.

On his march Babur sees a mongoose run up a tree, and finds out that the Hindus consider it a lucky animal to meet. He has a lot to say about the birds he sees in Hindustan. He describes the peacock, with its beautiful colours; in spite of its big fine tail which has another under it, it flies very badly, and so lives either in the hills or the jungle. But of all the birds, the parrot pleases him most, especially one that talks, but he says that its voice is very disagreeable, as if a bit of broken china were





being rubbed on a copper plate. And so on; through a long list of Indian birds, about each of which this clever king says something interesting.

And when he has finished with the birds he has something to say about the crocodiles he saw in the tanks, and the fish he watched being caught in the nets laid in the river.

Then we must hear all about the fruits—mangoes, plantains and many others—but he does not

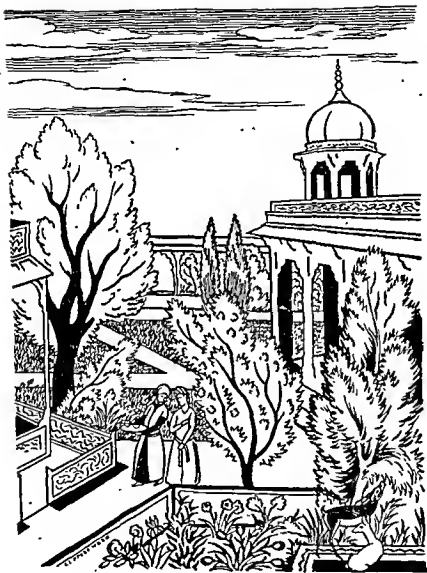
think any of them are very good, except the mangoes of Bengal and Guzerat.



Then we follow him along the roads and through the forests of India, as he looks at each tree and learns its name. He saw many kinds of flowers in Hindustan, but he only mentions four by name. The last of these is the white jasmine, the *chambeli*. It smelled as sweetly then as it does now.

But it is not only to learn about the animals, the trees and the flowers that we read Babur's diary. If we want to know what the Hindus thought of the Mogul army, we find it all there.

"When I first arrived at Agra," writes Babur, "there was a strong dislike between my people and the men of the place. It was the hot weather. All the inhabitants fled from terror, so we could get no food either for ourselves or our horses."

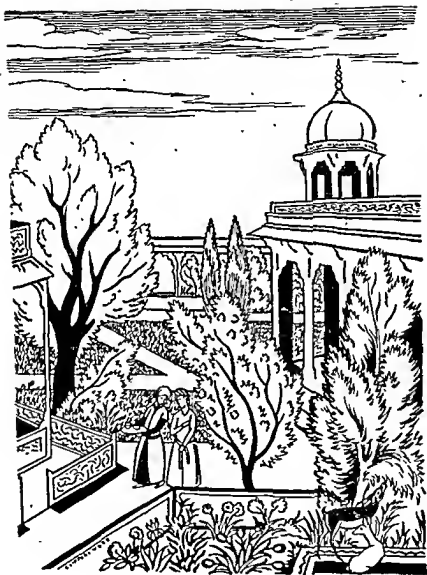


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The people of India had not forgotten the visit of the terrible Taimur. When Babur arrived with his army, they expected the same horrors all over again. But instead of rushing back to Turkestan with all the treasure he could carry, Babur settled down at Agra and began to make gardens. "In every corner," he writes, "I planted a garden; in every garden I sowed roses and narcissi." And then he adds, "We were annoyed with three things



in Hindustan: one was its heat, another its strong winds, the third its dust."

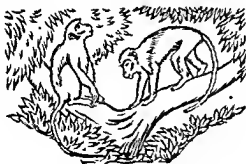
So Babur, having planted his gardens, started to build palaces by the side of the river Jumna, and in these palaces were great baths of stone, in which the water kept as cold as ice. All this, and much more, we can read in this *royal diary* which is called "The Memoirs of Babur."

Babur writes of the battles which he won against Ibrahim Lodi and Rana Sanga, the great Rajput, but he never boasts, only gives humble thanks to God for the victory.

And even when he is being crowned as Padishah, or Emperor of Hindustan, he has time to think of those at Kabul whom he loves, and to choose presents to send them. Even his servants are not forgotten.

How different from the fierce and greedy Taimur! How different from all the Moslems who had come to India before him! Brave they had been, and strong in the faith of Islam. Babur was both strong and faithful, but he was also merciful. His name is dear to his own people, and respected by those over whom he came to rule. He was not of India, but India is proud of

him—this wise and simple soldier; the king who loved flowers.



II

AKBAR

Babur had four sons, all of whom wanted to succeed him: But he loved his eldest son, Humayun, best, and left his kingdom to him. He begged Humayun to be good and generous to his brothers, and Humayun tried to be. It was no use, however, for his brothers plotted against him, and tried to seize his throne. At the same time a clever Afghan called Sher Khan attacked Humayun and



HUMAYUN

defeated him at Chausa on the banks of the Ganges. Humayun had to fly for his life, and became a homeless wanderer, first in the desert of Sind and then in Rajputana. When his fortunes were at their very lowest point, his son Akbar was born at Umarkot. His mother, a Persian lady, was only sixteen. Her name was Hamida Begum, and she was both clever and beautiful. She had to give up her baby and follow her husband to Persia, while Akbar was sent to his uncle at Kabul. It is said that when mother and child met again, Akbar picked Hamida Begum out of a group of ladies all dressed alike in green. He ran to her with outstretched arms, crying, "Mother! Mother!"

In the meantime Sher Khan had become Sher Shah and Sultan of Delhi, where he built a new city. He also built his own splendid tomb, which still stands at Sasseram in Bihar. He made four splendid roads, and laws for the safety of those who travelled on them. Along these roads he planted trees and built rest-houses. He was an able ruler, but reigned only five years. He was killed while storming a fort at Kalanaur in Bundelkhand. Humayun, who had managed to collect an army with the help of the Shah of Persia, now came back

and retook his father's cities of Agra and Delhi. But he did not live long enough to enjoy his conquests. When coming out of the library of the palace at Delhi, he heard the Moslem call to prayer. As he stopped to obey the summons, his foot caught in his robe, and he fell down the stairs and was killed.

His son Akbar was away with his guardian, Bairam Khan, in the Punjab. He was hurriedly crowned at Kalanaur, where the brick platform and the simple seat which were used at his coronation can still be seen.

Akbar was one of the greatest kings the world has ever known. When he was crowned he was only thirteen years of age, but he was already a man. He had inherited a kingdom, but it was very difficult to hold. He not only held it, but made it into a great empire, and himself the ruler of Afghanistan and more than half of India. He was a great soldier, but a greater statesman, and did not fight for fighting's sake. He took for his model all the great kings of India that had gone before him—Aśoka, Harsha, and his father's enemy, Sher Shah. Babur had been a scholar and a poet as well as a soldier. Humayun loved books, poetry

music. Akbar never learned to read or write, but he was the wisest man in his kingdom, and greater than his grandfather Babur. He gathered round him the brave, the wise, and all men of talent. If he heard of a poet of Persia who had written some beautiful verses, he sent for him to come to court. If a great soldier served another master, Akbar never rested until that soldier served him. Birbal, the witty Brahman, was his dearest and most constant companion; Tansen, the sweetest singer in all Hindustan, was given rich rewards to leave his master, a Raja of Rajasthan, to come and sing to Akbar. And when he first heard Tansen, he cried aloud, "Surely no other singer is equal to Tansen!"

Then Tansen replied, "Your Majesty, my guru, a Sannyasi of Mathura, sings far more sweetly than I do."

"Then let him come and sing to me," commanded Akbar.

"Sire, he is greater than all the Emperors of the world," said Tansen; "if you wish to hear him, then Your Majesty must go to him."

It is said that the Emperor went on foot to the cave of the Sannyasi, who was with great difficulty persuaded to sing. It was as Tansen had said—

the most beautiful song in the world. "How is it," cried the Emperor, "that this holy man sings better than my Tansen?"

"Sire," replied Tansen, "I sing to please an Emperor, but my guru sings to please God."

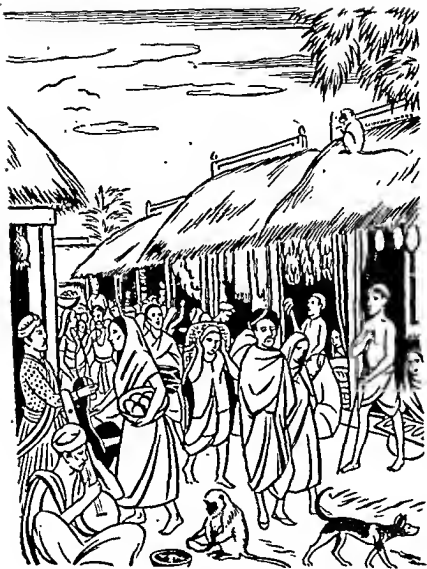
But there was one man that even the Emperor Akbar could never bring to his court, and one woman whom no gold or power could buy. The one was Partap Singh, Rana of Mewar, the other Chand Bibi, the heroic defender of Ahmednagar.

Rajput princes stood upon the right hand and the left hand of the great Mogul. They gave their daughters to him in marriage. In return he made them rich and powerful, but Partap Singh remained faithful to Mewar, and Chand Bibi to Ahmednagar.

Under the rule of Akbar, all art and trade flourished in India. Beautiful buildings sprang up, surrounded by gardens in which fountains played and sweet flowers grew. The streets of Delhi and Agra were busy with people, going this way and that, laden with things they had to sell. The bazaars were gay with the wares of merchants from all over the world. Rich silks and carpets from Persia, gems from Ceylon; stuffs from Arabia, and

pretty things from the far distant China and Japan. All races jostled each other, even a few white-skinned Europeans, Christian priests, stern in their long black gowns and broad hats. A strange sight amongst the gaily coloured crowd. Here a dancing girl, her full skirts swirling round her ankles which tinkled with bells, would bargain with an old woman selling beads. A man with a basket of clay pots would skip out of the way of a party of horsemen who galloped towards the palace. A blind man, tapping the ground with his staff, would beg for alms in the name of Allah. Another, with matted hair and body grey with ashes, would beat his breast, and cry aloud in ancient Hindu fashion. All were free, Moslem, Christian or Hindu, to come and go in the city of Akbar, and to preach their religion, for the great Mogul respected all creeds.

The fame of the great Mogul spread to far-distant countries. A letter even came from the Queen of England to the Mogul court. The Englishman who brought it had travelled by the overland route through Turkey. Akbar asked him a great many questions about the manners and customs of the West. He wanted to know what





CLIFFORD WESS

the English thought about their Queen, and what sort of palace she lived in. The Englishman had to admit that there was nothing so splendid to be seen in his country as Fathpur Sikri, the splendid city that Akbar had built twenty-three miles to the west of Delhi. This city was a perfect model of town-planning, with its beautiful palaces and mosques. To-day people who go to see it are amazed to find many of the buildings still standing very much as they were in the time of Akbar. One may walk beneath the balcony where the Emperor himself stood to give justice to his subjects. The houses of the Raja Birbal, Faizi the poet, and Abu-l-Fazl are still there. Who can imagine the glory and grandeur of Fathpur Sikri until he has seen its still splendid buildings?

Well may it be called the Dream City. Built of red sandstone, at sunset and sunrise it glows like the heart of a fire.

When the Englishman was shown all its beauties, its gardens, its fountains, its gilding and its carving, he had to say, "My Queen has no palace equal to this. She spends all her money on ships."

"Ships!" exclaimed the great Mogul. "Why



CLIFFORD WESS

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF THE EUROPEANS

FOR more than a thousand years after the invasion of Alexander, Europeans learned very little more about India than what the Greeks had told them. But trade between East and West went on. Under the Róman Empire there was a large trade with Southern India, and we have already heard how precious the spices, pepper, pearls and other Indian products were considered in Europe. Roman merchants must have sailed across the Arabian Sea to the west coast, but if any of them wrote the story of his adventures, it has not come down to us.

Later on came the preaching of Mohammed, and the Arab empire spread to East and West. The sea trade came into the hands of the Moslems, and Basra, at the head of the Persian Gulf, was founded as a port for Indian trade: On the European side, Venice grew rich by keeping this trade to herself by treaties with Moslem powers.

But other European nations were jealous, and began to think about finding a sea-passage to India.

It was the Portuguese who discovered the right route. After exploring farther and farther along the west coast of Africa, they at last rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and found themselves in the Indian Ocean.

About the same time an explorer called Covilham was sent overland by the King of Portugal to find out whether Indian sailors knew of a sea-route from the coast of Africa to the East Indies. Covilham reached Aden, crossed the Arabian Sea, and arrived at Cannanore. He kept a journal of his travels in India, which has been lost, but he was able to report to the King of Portugal that a ship which rounded the Cape of Good Hope could find its way to India.

And so on a July day of 1497, ten years after the Portuguese had rounded the Cape, all the citizens of Lisbon assembled together on the banks of the Tagus to see Vasco da Gama set sail for India. Everybody felt that a great venture was beginning. A long procession of priests in their robes chanted hymns, in which the people joined, as the four little ships moved slowly down the river to the sea. Ten

months later Vasco da Gama anchored off Calicut, the chief port on the west coast of India. The largest of his ships was one of two hundred tons at the most. To-day we can reach India from London, going all the way by sea, in three weeks, by a liner of twenty thousand tons.

When Vasco da Gama arrived there, he found that the west coast of India was under a number of Hindu rulers. The most important of these was the Zamorin of Calicut. The Zamorin himself did not object to the Portuguese visitors; but the Moors—descendants of the Arab traders who had settled on the coast, and who carried on most of the sea trade—did not at all like the arrival of the European traders.

It is a strange fact that Vasco da Gama and his companions thought that the Hindus were some kind of Christians. One of the men who sailed with Vasco da Gama wrote an account of the voyage and of what he saw at Calicut, and this is what he says, "The city of Calicut is inhabited by Christians. They are of tawny complexion. Some of them have big beards and long hair, while others shave their heads, except for a tuft on the crown, to show that they are Christians." So little did Europe know about India in those days.

Vasco da Gama and some of his men visited a Hindu temple, which they took to be a church. "In the church," says a Portuguese writer, "they threw holy water over us, and gave us some white earth, which the Christians of this country are in the habit of putting on foreheads."

All this sounds very friendly, but some trouble was bound to arise between people who did not understand each other's language. For instance, a horse was brought to Vasco da Gama to ride on to an interview. Saddles were not used in Calicut, and when Vasco da Gama saw that the horse had no saddle, he thought it was meant as an insult. No one could explain that it was not, and Vasco da Gama refused to mount.

Vasco da Gama was received at a kind of *Darbar* by the Zamorin, and told him (of course through an interpreter) that he was an ambassador from the King of Portugal, who wished to be a friend to the Zamorin. The latter was pleased, and said that he would send an embassy in return. The Moors, however, were jealous, and tried to upset Vasco da Gama's plans; they told the Zamorin that he was not an ambassador but a PIRATE, and they gave Vasco da Gama a lot of trouble in other ways.

But he was able to take back to Portugal a letter from the Zamorin. It was written on a palm leaf by one of the Portuguese, and was signed by the Zamorin. It said, "Vasco da Gama, a gentleman of your court, came to my country, and I was glad that he came. In my city there is plenty of cinnamon, cloves, pepper, and precious stones. The things which I want from your country are silver, gold, coral, and scarlet cloth."

When Vasco da Gama returned to Portugal he was received with great applause. All the Portuguese were sure that they were going to make their fortunes by the Eastern trade. For in those days a nation used to claim a "monopoly," which meant the sole right to trade with a distant land which it had discovered. Of course it did not please the English or the Dutch that the Portuguese should have the sole right to trade in Eastern seas, but for a long time they did not feel strong enough to challenge the claim.

So for about a hundred years the Portuguese enjoyed their "monopoly." From Japan in the Far East to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea in the west, and to the Cape of Good Hope in the south, they commanded the sea and held most of the



trade. A fleet of their merchant vessels sailing from Goa to Cambay or Surat, sometimes contained two hundred and fifty vessels.

The trade in spices and pepper was especially valuable, for a ship-load of pepper could be sold in Europe at a great profit.

The main object of the Portuguese was trade, but they were very eager to spread Christianity, as they understood it. They tried to make converts by force. Within the walls of the fortresses which they built along the west coast, only Portuguese and Christians of the Roman Church were allowed to live.

Two famous names in the history of Portuguese India deserve to be remembered—those of Albuquerque and Francis Xavier. Albuquerque, who captured Goa and made it the Portuguese headquarters, was a very able man, both as a governor and as a soldier. He was the chief founder of Portuguese power in the East. He tried to win the good-will of the Indians with whom he had to deal; by his justice he helped the Portuguese cause as much as his skill in war. For many years his name was venerated, all the more because he was followed by some cruel Viceroys. We are

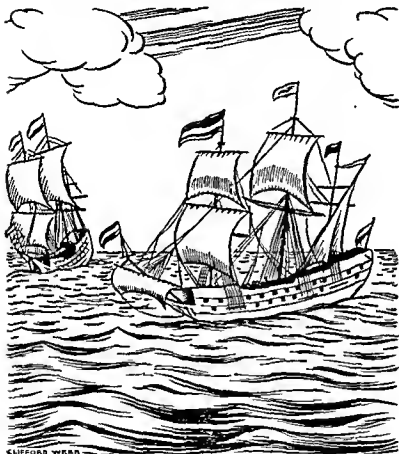
told that the Hindus and even some of the Moslems of Goa would visit his tomb and complain of the oppression from which they suffered.

Francis Xavier was a simple and pious man who showed in his life what true Christianity could be; he made many converts as a missionary among the low-caste people.

Old Goa is now almost in ruins and almost deserted, but it contains many fine churches. Among them is the chapel where the body of St. Francis Xavier rests in its silver coffin. It has often been shown in public.

When the English and the Dutch decided to have their share of the Eastern trade, the Portuguese "monopoly" could not be kept up. There were many reasons why Portugal could not keep up an empire in the East. Though the Portuguese were brave men, and fought gallantly in times of danger, many of the Government servants were not loyal to each other or even to their king. The Government of Goa was not well managed. The fortresses began to fall into decay; the Viceroys complained that they were not given sufficient men or guns to defend them. The Government of Portugal took little notice. In the meantime the Dutch appeared as rivals.

The Dutch, of course, were regarded by the Portuguese as trespassers. They decided to turn



them out. But the Dutchmen were very determined men, who had been trained in a very hard struggle in Europe. They were sturdy fighters as

well as first-class seamen. The Portuguese were losing power, and so the result was never in doubt.

The Dutch attacked the Portuguese fortresses in Malabar. The Portuguese fought desperately, but one by one their chief fortresses were taken. The last to fall was Cochin. The Portuguese commander had made a brave defence, but he was at last forced to surrender, and to hand over the keys to the Dutch Admiral. And so in 1662 Portuguese dominion in Malabar came to an end.

But the Portuguese had left some mark on India. Albuquerque had shown that the Malabaris could make good soldiers in his army, and, among other products, the Portuguese introduced tobacco.



CHAPTER V

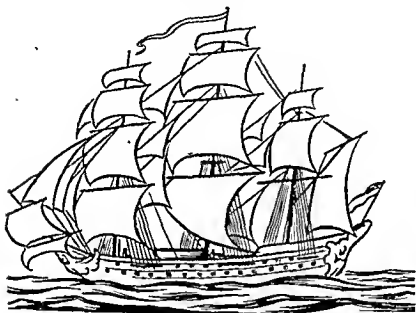
THE STORY OF JOHN COMPANY

THE story of how a company of traders was led into founding an empire is one of the most remarkable in all history. If anybody had predicted it, he would have been laughed at. But when we look back on it now, we can see how it came about.

It was the spice trade that lured Englishmen to the East. After Drake had sailed round the world, and the great Spanish Armada had been defeated, English seamen felt that they could hold their own. Just before 1600 the Dutch began to defy the Portuguese by sending ships round the Cape to the spice islands. English merchants and seamen were keenly interested, and when the price of pepper was doubled to London buyers, the East India Company was founded. Queen Elizabeth granted it a charter.

For some years the Company tried to trade with

the spice islands and to set up factories, or trading stations, there. But the Dutch, who were turning out the Portuguese, were determined to keep the trade to themselves, and to drive out all new-comers.



They had the support of the Dutch Government, while the English had no such help. The result was that the English began to turn their attention to India. So we may say that if the Dutch had left the English to trade freely in the islands, the East India Company might never have become the paramount power in India.

On the west coast of India they had the Portuguese to reckon with. All they wanted was peaceful trade, but that was just what the Portuguese would not permit, and it was not till the Company's men showed that they could fight as well as trade that they got a footing in Western India. At last the Portuguese came to an agreement with the Company, who were allowed to trade on equal terms.

In those days Surat was the chief port on the north-west coast, and through it passed most of the trade with Northern India.

While they were still struggling for a foothold there, the Company decided to send out a real ambassador—not a mere agent—to the court of the Emperor. They chose Sir Thomas Roe, and they could not have selected a better man. As ambassador from King James I he resided for three years at Jehangir's court at Ajmer, Mandu, and Ahmedabad. He kept a journal in which he recorded his adventures, and what he saw and heard at the Mogul court. It is a very interesting book, and gives us many vivid pictures of the court life in the days of Jehangir.

Jehangir saw at once that Roe was

different type of man from the sailors and merchants who were the only Englishmen that he had hitherto seen. He took a fancy to him, and at times treated him as a familiar friend. Roe was even admitted to the royal drinking bouts, for Jehangir was not a strict Moslem. But Roe was a serious and sober man, and was glad to escape as soon as he could without offending the Padshah.

On one occasion Roe was summoned to inspect six pictures on a table. One of these was a picture which Roe had presented to the Emperor, with the remark that he believed that no Indian artist could equal it. The other five were copies, and Roe was asked to pick out the original. The light in the room was rather dim, and Roe took some time to make up his mind. He tells us that Jehangir, seeing that he was puzzled, "was very merry and joyful." The Emperor presented Roe with one of the copies, wrapping it up for him with his own hands, and remarking, "You see we are not so unskilful as you esteem us!"

At Jehangir's select birthday party Roe had to drink from a gold cup a draught of what he calls "mingled wine, half of the grape, half artificial." It was so strong that it made Roe sneeze, which

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much amused the Emperor. The gold cup was presented to Roe as a keep-sake; Asaf Khan (the brother of Nur Jahan) told Roe that he ought to kneel and knock his head on the ground as a sign of gratitude. Roe, however, always thought of his dignity as an ambassador, and preferred merely to bow in the European style. Later on Jehangir became very friendly, and told Roe that he esteemed him "more than any Frank." Shortly afterwards trays were brought in laden with gold and silver almonds, which the Emperor scattered among his courtiers. They all scrambled to pick them up, but Roe did not compete, "for," he says, "I saw his son take up none." As the night wore on and the wine flowed, Jehangir could no longer sit up, and at this point Roe discreetly slipped away.

But though Jehangir was not a sober man himself, no one who smelt of drink was allowed to approach him, and no mention of the Emperor's drinking bouts was permitted. An imprudent noble who made a remark about the revels of the night before was very nearly flogged to death. Jehangir could be very cruel in his punishments.

Roe has given us an interesting portrait of

Prince Khurram—afterwards Emperor Shah Jehan.
" I never saw so settled a countenance nor any man



CLIFFORD WEBB

keep so constant a gravity, never smiling, nor in face showing any respect or difference of

men, but mingled with extreme pride and contempt of all."

In the cold weather of 1616, Jehangir decided to make a royal tour. Roe tells us that an attendant brought on a dish a large fish lying in some white stuff. Into this Jehangir thrust his finger, and with it marked his forehead for luck. The Emperor himself was laden with gold and precious stones. Beside him two attendants carried gold maces and fly-flaps. Before him went "drums, trumpets and loud music," and many canopies of cloth of gold set in many places with great rubies. The Company had presented Jehangir with a coach of which he had an exact model made. In this model he now rode, and upon the box was the English coachman in royal apparel. The second coach was reserved for Nur Jahan. The ladies of the harem "were carried like paraquets in cages," half a mile behind the Emperor. To accommodate the court, a great canvas city twenty miles in circumference sprang up when they halted. Within it were all kinds of shops. Roe tells us of the order and splendour of the camp, and says he was a little ashamed of his own humble outfit.

Jehangir spent a good deal of time in hunting

and hawking, sometimes on lakes, for which boats were carried on special carts. In the evening Jehangir held a drinking party, when he would become "very affable and full of gentle conversation."

When Roe felt ill, the Emperor sent him five bottles of wine from his own store.

But what Roe wanted was a formal treaty. At times he was promised something like it, but he never got it. A ruler like Jehangir liked to feel that what he had granted to-day he could take away to-morrow. Still, by insisting on being treated with respect as an ambassador, Roe did a great deal for the Company.

The advice which Roe gave the Company was to stick to trade, and not to aim at any dominion or military power. The Portuguese and the Dutch, he said, had spent too much money in keeping up fortresses and garrisons. In Roe's day, and for some time to come, this advice was sound, and the directors of the Company tried to follow it as long as they could. But when the Mogul Empire began to break up after the death of Aurangzeb, the Company found that it had to defend itself or be crushed.

Down to 1685 Surat was the headquarters of the Western Presidency, so called because the factory was ruled by a president. The Company had no military power, but the president maintained a good deal of state. Except on feast-days he dined in his own rooms; when he went out he was carried in a *palki*. In front of him marched his guards, with men carrying flags and maces and even an ostrich-feather fan. The factors lived rather like students in a college; the Company tried to keep them as sober and pious as possible, and provided them with a chaplain.

In spite of his dignity, the president had many worries. Customs officers often made trouble, and *bakshis* had to be paid. Then there were the pirates—a very serious danger. In the seventeenth century pirates swarmed all along the routes from Europe to the East. It is difficult for us in these days to realize that on every voyage to or from India a man ran some risk of being killed, or made a slave, by pirates. Traders had no legal protection against them, and had to defend themselves—if they could. As some of these pirate ships were commanded by Englishmen, the Mogul Government tried to make the Company responsible for the

losses to Indian traders. Several times the Company's factors were imprisoned and heavily fined. Indian ships used to take cargoes to the Red Sea ports and sell them for gold and silver. On their return, laden with treasure, they were a tempting prey to the pirates. It was very bad luck for the Company, whose own ships sometimes suffered in the same way, to have to make good these losses.

There was a famous pirate called Every, who captured and plundered an eighty-gun ship belonging to Aurangzeb himself. This ship was supposed to be too strong to be attacked. But Every was a daring fellow, and got away with fifty-two *lakhs* of rupees. When the plundered ship reached Surat, it was lucky for the Company that the Governor was a just man. Not only did he save the factory from being plundered by a mob, but he persuaded Aurangzeb to permit the English to continue trading. He pointed out that the pirates had no nationality—they were ruffians from all over the world. In the end the Company agreed to convoy the Indian ships to and from the Red Sea, and the factors were released after being eleven months in prison.

Later on the pirates became so troublesome and caused the Company such losses that it was on the point of giving up trade in despair. In the eighteenth century there was the Maratha Kanhoji Angria with his fort at Gheria, who preyed upon the shipping of the west coast, and even attacked the strongest ships of the Company. Gheria was at last captured by Clive and Admiral Watson in 1756.

Then there were the "Interlopers" as they were called, that is unlicensed traders, for the Company had a monopoly. The most famous of them was Thomas Pitt, grandfather of the Earl of Chatham, a determined and daring man. On one occasion he raced the Company's Bengal agent to India, landed before him, and had made himself so strong by the time the agent arrived that the latter could do nothing. Later on the Company very shrewdly made Pitt Governor of Madras; he was a strong governor, and, of course, knew how to keep the "Interlopers" in check.

The first territory acquired by the Company in India was a stretch of sand on which the sea "broke in a double line of surf." It was leased in 1640 by an agent called Francis Day from the local Nayak.

Day was permitted to build a fort here, but when the Directors heard of this they were very angry; they still had no thought of dominion, and only wanted trade. Day's fort became famous later on as Fort St. George, and Madras grew up round it. . . .

In 1661 the island of Bombay came to Charles II as part of his dowry when he married a Portuguese princess. Charles leased it to the Company for ten pounds a year. The Portuguese at Goa, though they had not developed Bombay, knew the value of it, and were very unwilling to hand it over. The great city of to-day was then little more than a fishing village, and for a long time the Company found it very unhealthy. It was reckoned that two monsoons were the average life of a servant of the Company. The man who more than any other helped Bombay to grow and flourish was Gerald Aungier, who was Governor from 1669 to 1677. His just rule attracted traders of all castes and creeds.

In 1690 Job Charnock, on a miserable site—a mere mud flat—made the beginning of what has grown into the City of Palaces—the modern Calcutta. Before the Company developed them,

these three cities were worth nothing. The present wealth of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras is proof that the Company in seeking their own profit brought some profit to India too.

The steps by which the Company became the paramount power in India were often disapproved by the Directors in England, but once the Company in its struggle with the French had become an armed power, it had to follow its destiny. More than once its fate trembled in the balance. But at critical moments it was served by men of genius—Clive, Warren Hastings, Sir Arthur Wellesley (afterwards the Duke of Wellington), and his brother, Lord Wellesley, perhaps the greatest of the governors general.

When it had established itself as chief Power in India, it set to work to make good the defects in its rule. Then it more than atoned for the abuses which marked its rule in early days. In the first half of the nineteenth century it produced some of the noblest and finest of administrators—men like Elphinstone, Munro, Thomason and Henry Lawrence. The immense work of land survey and of a fair settling of the revenue was begun. The Thugs were rooted out, the Pindaris were crushed,

and India enjoyed a peace and order which it had not known since the days of the Guptas. It was the Company who laid the foundations of the India we know.



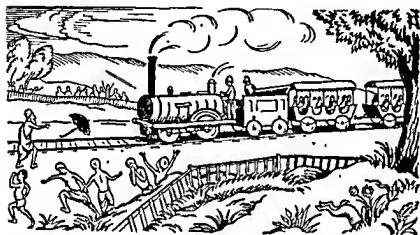
CHAPTER VI

THE INDIA WE KNOW

THE India we know is not the India of the early Aryans, nor yet the India of the great Moguls. It is not the India which Vasco da Gama and his Portuguese sailors mistook for a Christian country. It is not even the India of Shivaji or Ranjit Singh, for during the last hundred years or so great changes have taken place.

A hundred years ago there were no railways in India. Bombay was the first city to have a railway station. In 1853 a short length of line was laid from Bombay to Thana, and a train was dragged by a puffing, snorting engine, to the great wonder of all who beheld it. Many of those who saw the engine start were quite sure it would blow up or fall over. At first very few people would travel in the train. It did not go at all fast, but with bumps and jerks. Smoke and sparks came out of the funnel,

and sometimes the engine stopped altogether. Among those looking on were some who felt quite sure it was a demon. One very old man threw his umbrella down in front of it as an offering to appease



its anger. This was the beginning of the great railway system that India has to-day.

If Bombay led the way with the first railway train, it was Calcutta that sent the first telegram. In 1855 a telegraph line was laid down between Calcutta and Agra, much to the surprise of the birds, who, however, found the wires very useful to perch on. Other railway and telegraph lines soon followed.

happen, for they are part of the very life of the Indian people. Among the pilgrims there may be a merchant who dashes along in a fine motor-car. He may have just as much need of the favour of the god as the little old woman who carries all her



possessions in a bundle at the end of a stick held over her shoulder. Or a party of mill-workers who have got leave and hired a motor-lorry, between them, will scatter those on foot, in their haste to reach the holy spot. There all are the same, rich

last for days. They take their food with them, and settle down in the train as if it were their home. A hundred years ago many of them would never have thought of leaving their own village, unless it were to make a pilgrimage to some famous shrine. Then whole families would set out, either packed into a bullock-cart or on foot. Even the animals were not left behind; a bird in a cage or the faithful dog made up the party. Then the dusty roads became busy with people. Old men, almost bent double with age, tottered along bearing red flags. Babies stared out of their mothers' arms at the strange sights and sounds of the roads. Little boys, wearing short skirts and velvet caps glittering with silver embroidery, ran ahead of the carts, shouting and singing. Shy girls peeped behind their grandmothers' backs, or walked sedately, their saris drawn across their faces. All were looking forward to the great moment of arrival at the shrine. This was

In 1854 India issued her first postage stamp, with cheap rates for inland postage. Even the poorest coolie could afford to send a letter from Bombay to his mother in Calcutta, for the stamp would cost him only half an anna. But before he could send the letter, he would most likely have had to get it written for him in the bazaar. A hundred years ago very few people in India could write.

With post and telegraph services established, with railways opening up the whole country, India began to make rapid progress. Before the coming of the Europeans, time had meant little in India. There were no watches or clocks. Men worked by the sun, or until the light faded. There were no lamps, and if there had been there was no kerosene-oil to fill them until it was imported. Now every little hut has its oil-lamp or *tel batti*, while the big houses, shops and public buildings blaze with electric light. If the people had gone without all these things for thousands of years, yet they were very quick to learn the use of them. To-day an express train is crowded with Indians who seem to enjoy a railway journey. Old men, women and little children set off on journeys that sometimes

last for days. They take their food with them, and settle down in the train as if it were their home. A hundred years ago many of them would never have thought of leaving their own village, unless it were to make a pilgrimage to some famous shrine. Then whole families would set out, either packed into a bullock-cart or on foot. Even the animals were not left behind; a bird in a cage or the faithful dog made up the party. Then the dusty roads became busy with people. Old men, almost bent double with age, tottered along bearing red flags. Babies stared out of their mothers' arms at the strange sights and sounds of the roads. Little boys, wearing short skirts and velvet caps glittering with silver embroidery, ran ahead of the carts, shouting and singing. Shy girls peeped behind their grandmothers' backs, or walked sedately, their saris drawn across their faces. All were looking forward to the great moment of arrival at the shrine. This was a journey to be remembered all their lives; perhaps the last that the old folk would ever take. It was worth all the fatigue, this pilgrimage; for at the shrine of the saint they laid down their burden in the hope of the favour of the god.

These pilgrimages still happen; they will always

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happen, for they are part of the very life of the Indian people. Among the pilgrims there may be a merchant who dashes along in a fine motor-car. He may have just as much need of the favour of the god as the little old woman who carries all her



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man, poor man, prince or peasant; all are gathered together for the same purpose. Back go the mill-workers, back to the silk or cotton-mills fitted up with European machinery, where Indians are in charge of every type of machine. In the busy



streets the electric trams are driven by Indians, so are the motor-cars and motor-lorries, just as if for the last thousand years they had been used to them. And yet in the memory of living people, letters were carried by runners; there were no post or telegraph

offices, and the bullock-cart or pony dak was the only means of travelling, unless one rode or went on foot. Many people had to walk, often very great distances, among them the famous woman pilgrim, Pandita Ramabai. She tells us how she and her brother walked all the way from Raichur in the Madras Presidency to Calcutta. They were high caste children, but orphans. The great famine of 1876 had robbed them of their parents. They had no money and no friends. They had not even any shoes, but that was not such a hardship as it would have been to European children. Pandita Ramabai was one of the first women of India to study Sanskrit, which in her time was a forbidden language for women. She was also one of the first Indian women to cross the sea to America and England. She took the journey over the "black water," so that she might get help for her little Indian sisters, the child widows, whose lives were often so sad and hopeless.

India has always been a land of learning, but only for the few. It has had its great poets, its great scholars and its great thinkers, but they have been Brahmans or men of royal birth. The Moslems brought in their own culture, which all

could share. But at the great seats of learning in ancient India, such as Kanchi in the south and Nalanda in the north, only men of high birth might study.

To-day all this has changed, and not altogether by the coming of the Europeans. Educated Indians have done their share to bring about the change; they have worked side by side with Europeans to help the poorer classes, no matter of what caste or creed. Schools and colleges are now open to all who wish to learn. The son of a poor cultivator may one day take his degree. And not only the son, but also the daughter, for thanks to women such as Pandita Ramabai, female education has spread all over India. Indian students, both men and women, now go to Europe. Boys, who a hundred years ago would have been scaring birds from their fathers' crops, now stride up the steps of some big Presidency College. Girls, who not so very long ago would have been slapped for asking to go to school, now sit in well-lit class-rooms, play games, and can tell you in English where London, Paris and New York are. And later, too, some of them may go there, and study how to become doctors or lawyers. It is only just lately that a

Hindu lady was president of the Bombay Municipality.

And it is well that Indian girls should be educated, for no one can help women as much as women, and no women so well as those of the same race. They understand each other's difficulties in a way that no foreigner ever can. We can learn much from the people of other countries, and we should always be on the watch for the good that they can teach us. That is why foreign travel broadens the mind. Our own ways are not always the best ways, *but sometimes they are better than* those learned from other people. Not everything that has been brought into India has been good for India, but many great improvements have come from outside. It is in the last hundred years that roads have become safe for travellers, that means have been found to check plague and other deadly epidemics. Famine has been fought and at last conquered. Time has been saved by means of improved communications. Countless lives have been saved by hospital treatment. Cities have been cleaned, streets widened, and better houses built. Indian women, if not happier, are healthier and freer, and some day health and freedom will mean

a greater happiness. These are all important signs of rapid progress, but the heart of India remains the same as when, thousands of years ago, the first Aryans descended into the country of the five rivers; or when the good King Harsha came with a sound of golden drums to see that all was well with his people.

The cultivator of the Deccan still follows his simple Maratha plough. He may have seen the grand steam-ploughs, but he does not want one. He knows his good black cotton soil too well to make a change. Away in the little mud hut his wife still grinds the corn for his midday meal. The great flour mills, where machines do all the work, may be all very well, but she prefers the old way. Her little sons and daughters go to school. The older ones know English. They show her the pictures in their lesson-books, pictures of other countries where the women wear hats on their heads. She much prefers her own way of dressing—the simple sari, which acts as dress and head-covering as well. It is like the one that Sita wore, and what could be a better example than that good and gentle Hindu lady? .

A hundred years have brought many .